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Statement of Deacon Arthur L. Miller

Connecticut Coalition to Save Darfur/ Director: Office for Black Catholic Ministries

to the Education Committee, Connecticut General Assembly

29 February 2008

Chairman Senator Gaffey, Chairman Representative Fleischmann, and Members of the Committee, I deeply appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today at this hearing on the Genocide Awareness Education bill.

I have had the wonderful opportunity to speak at public forums, houses of worship, dozens of schools and universities, both private and public throughout Ct. from Danbury to East Haven, from Hartford and Avon, to Windsor and Southington. I have spoken at elementary schools, and high schools. I have crisscrossed the state. What I have spoken of, is the horrific reality of genocide. I have spoken of the result of what happens when one group seeks power over another by dehumanization. I have spoken of the examples of the history of genocide and how that history continues to repeat itself, over and over, and over.

What I have learned, is the students of today understand the world is a much smaller place than you and I may have understood as young students. I have learned that students of today are willing to reach beyond the limited scope of our borders to gain a fuller understanding of the world's conflicts. We must equip them, we must equip them so they can become better citizens for our state, better citizens for America. It is an absolute necessity to provide the opportunity for the children of Ct. to be given the chance to become global citizens, with global perspectives, and global concerns.

I came to realize the children who are in eighth grade today...those students who will be going on to high school in the fall and are turning 14 this year will be eligible to vote in the election of 2012, That means they will have the opportunity to vote for the second term of whomever is elected in the fall. We are obliged to equip them with the full understanding of global matters and global responsibilities. Our citizens, the world's citizens deserve no less. For far too many have died while the world stood eerily quiet and let it happen. From Europe to Asia and Africa... The only vehicle that can stop this is awareness and education...Please do not prevent our children from becoming the preventers of genocidal atrocities

I believe that as part of the, no one can sit idly tolerant of the great injustices that happen anywhere in the world.

"If God were to give us an 11th commandment," Deacon Miller proposes, "I believe it would read: Thou shall not be a bystander."

"Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I am prepared to answer any questions."